

With all the time saving devices we own, you'd would think that we would have so much more time to do the things we like to do. But how often does it work that way? Most of our comments about time relate to the speed with which it is passing. For example, we are already in the second half of the year. Next thing you know we'll be getting ready for Christmas. Sorry.

If there was ever a busy person it was Jesus. There was a constant flow of people wanting to see him, to hear him, to have him heal their sick and to test out his theology. For the disciples it wasn't any different. They were in the middle of it all and we are told that “there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and the disciples didn't even have time to eat.”

Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Come apart into a deserted place, and rest awhile.’ They went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. They needed a time out.

Time out is a good strategy in sports. When the game needs to be slowed down; when weary players need a short break; when advice from the coach is needed to give the team the winning edge; when a player needs encouragement and support; when it seems that the opponents are getting an upper hand; a call for time out is what is needed.

Do you think you might need a time out? Now intellectually, you might agree that's a good idea, but more often than not we struggle on – we're convinced we don't have time to stop for a while. In fact, we often feel guilty when we do stop for a while and have a bit of ‘me’ time.

Please hear me on this point: Jesus didn't feel guilty about taking time out. He didn't make his disciples feel guilty either. They were human, so was he. They had a hectic life and there was a sense of urgency to get as much done as possible in the short time that Jesus had in the world. Jesus has no qualms about having a little bit of time away from the pressures that had been placed on him by others. He has a concern also for his disciples after all they have just come back from a strenuous mission. And so he says, ‘Let's get away for a while to quiet spot and rest.’

All of us have days where we need that kind of invitation. Just as Jesus needed to get away for a while, so do you.

And this was not an isolated incident. In the first chapter of Mark's gospel we are told, “Early in the morning, while it was still dark, he rose up and went out, and departed into a deserted place, and prayed there” (1:35). It seems that the disciples didn't see the need for Jesus to be doing this when there was so much to be done. They searched for Jesus. When they found him they said, “Everyone is looking for you” (1:37). In other words, “Jesus, there's a lot to be done. Let's get busy.”

We can learn from Jesus. He was never too busy or too overwhelmed by everything that was happening in his life to take time out with his heavenly Father and pray. Of course, we can pray anywhere, even on the busiest street corner. But we can collect our thoughts a lot better when we

are alone, apart from the noise and the hustle of the crowd, fixing our thoughts on God and talking to him about what is on our hearts and in minds at that time.

Yes, Jesus had important things to do, nevertheless, he took time to go to a quiet place and pray.

God himself called 'time out' at the very beginning of creation. In the Ten Commandments he laid down a clear principle: 'You have six days in which to do your work, but the seventh day is a day of rest dedicated to me'. God made us and he knows better than we do that we need that time out.

Listen, you can't serve well if your body is fatigued, your nerves are frayed, you shout at everyone who disagrees with you. You are just worn out because everything and everyone is annoying you. You feel like doing anything but praising God. Both body and mind need a rest for a while. Take time out.

In Psalm 46 the Lord says, "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10) "Calm down", he says, "Stop a moment and remember the goodness of God. Meditate on his Word. Let it speak to you. Then let God know what is in your heart."

It's so hard for us to slow down because we're often trying to prove ourselves to others. And we're often trying to prove to ourselves that we're OK. But you know what? That's why God sent us a Savior. That's why Jesus died on a cross. That's why he adopted us into his family through our baptism. That's why he feeds us his body and blood and assures us again and again that we are forgiven, that all of the things we done to waste time are forgiven. That's hard for us to grasp. God forgives all of this, even those wasted hours that we don't even feel bad about.

All of our misspent hours were nailed with Jesus on the cross. All of the hurt we have caused others because we have been too busy, all of harm we have done to ourselves because we have tried to cram too much into a day were nailed with Jesus onto the cross.

Let this word from God today be a catalyst to challenge and comfort you. Take time out with him and be refreshed by one who loves you so dearly.